

**IN THE CLAIMS**

1 (Currently Amended). A method comprising:  
converting a metal silicide into a metal silicate; and  
selectively removing the metal silicate using an etchant that is selective to metal silicate.

2 (Original). The method of claim 1 including selectively removing the metal silicate using a wet etchant.

3 (Original). The method of claim 2 including selectively removing the metal silicate using a wet etchant at a temperature between 25 and 120°C.

4 (Original). The method of claim 1 converting a metal silicide into a metal silicate using oxidation.

5 (Original). The method of claim 4 including using a metal oxidant selected from the group including hydrogen peroxide, R<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, where R is an organic substituent, O<sub>3</sub> or O<sub>2</sub>.

6 (Original). The method of claim 1 including converting a metal silicide on a polysilicon gate electrode into a metal silicate, selectively removing the metal silicate, and thereafter removing the polysilicon gate electrode.

7 (Original). A method comprising:  
forming at least two polysilicon gate electrodes;  
forming a metal silicide on said gate electrodes;  
converting the metal silicide on one of said gate electrodes to a metal silicate and selectively removing the metal silicate; and  
removing the exposed polysilicon gate electrode.

8 (Original). The method of claim 7 including selectively removing the metal silicate using a wet etchant.

9 (Original). The method of claim 8 including selectively removing the metal silicate using a wet etchant at a temperature between 25 and 120°C.

10 (Original). The method of claim 7 including converting a metal silicide into a metal silicate using oxidation.

11 (Original). The method of claim 10 including using a metal oxidant selected from the group including hydrogen peroxide,  $R_2O_2$ , where R is an organic substituent,  $O_3$  or  $O_2$ .

Claims 12-16 (Canceled).

17 (Currently Amended). A method comprising:  
converting a metal germanide into a metal germanate; and  
selectively removing the metal germinate by using an etchant that is selective of  
the metal germanate.

18 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 17 including selectively removing the metal germanate using a wet etchant.

19 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 18 including selectively removing the metal germanate using a wet etchant at a temperature between 25 and 120°C.

20 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 17 converting a metal germanide into a metal germanate using oxidation.

21 (Original). The method of claim 20 including using a metal oxidant selected from the group including hydrogen peroxide,  $R_2O_2$ , where R is an organic substituent,  $O_3$  or  $O_2$ .

22 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 17 including converting a metal germanide on a polysilicon gate electrode into a metal germanate, selectively removing the metal germanate, and thereafter removing the polysilicon gate electrode.

23 (Currently Amended). A method comprising:

forming at least two gate electrodes;

forming a metal germanide on said gate electrodes;

converting the metal germanide on one of said gate electrodes to a metal germanate and selectively removing the metal germinate using an etchant that selectively etches metal germanate; and

removing the exposed gate electrode.

24 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 23 including selectively removing the metal germanate using a wet etchant.

25 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 24 including selectively removing the metal germanate using a wet etchant at a temperature between 25 and 120°C.

26 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 23 including converting a metal germanide into a metal germanate using oxidation.

27 (Original). The method of claim 26 including using a metal oxidant selected from the group including hydrogen peroxide, R<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, where R is an organic substituent, O<sub>3</sub> or O<sub>2</sub>.

Claims 28-32 (Canceled).